

Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11
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FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1187

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, KS, KN, US.
SUBJECT: SOUTH KOREAN NAVY SINKS NORTH KOREAN BOAT

1. AT APPROXIMATELY 1130 HOURS LOCAL ON 19 MAY ROK RADAR PICKED UP AN UNIDENTIFIED VESSEL SOUTH OF THE MLL. ROKN PATROL BOATS WERE ALERTED AND DISPATCHED ON AN INTERCEPT MISSION AT 1421 HRS. CONTACT WAS MADE IN ROK WATERS APPROXIMATELY 24 NM SOUTH OF THE MLL AND 11 NM SEAWARD. WHEN FIRST CITED THE UNIDENTIFIED VESSEL, INITIALLY BELIEVED TO BE A SKUNK BOAT, WAS HEADING NORTH EAST AT A SPEED OF 13 KNOTS. ROKN PATROL BOATS APPROACHED THE VESSEL AND RECOGNIZED A NORTH KOREAN FLAG. IGNORING AN ORDER TO STOP, THE VESSEL CONTINUED NORTHWARD AND THE ROKN PLACED A WARNING SHOT ACROSS ITS BOW. THE VESSEL RESPONDED WITH SMALL ARMS FIRE. THE VESSEL WAS SUBSEQUENTLY SUNK AT 30-30N, 128-49.5E AT 1503 HRS. EIGHT SURVIVORS DRESSED IN GREEN UNIFORMS WERE PICKED UP. THEY WERE TRANSPORTED TO SOKCHOKI AND ARRIVED IN SEOUL AT 0540 HRS ON 20 MAY. THEY ARE PRESENTLY BEING INTERROGATED BY KCIA AT THE COMBINED INTERROGATION CENTER. MEMBERS OF THE 501ST MILITARY INTELLIGENCE GROUP ARE OBSERVING THE INTERROGATION VIA TELEVISION. ALTHOUGH WE HAVE NO RESULTS OF THE INTERROGATION AT THIS TIME, IT IS BELIEVED

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THE VESSEL MAY HAVE BEEN A NORTH KOREAN FISHING CRAFT.

2. IN A BROADCAST OF P'YONGYANG DOMESTIC RADIO AT 1315 GMT ON 19 MAY, THE NORTH KOREAN CENTRAL NEWS AGENCY ACCUSED THE ROK OF SINKING A FISHING BOAT AND OF KIDNAPPING PERSONNEL ABOARD. THE BOAT WAS IDENTIFIED AS #6122 WHICH LEFT PORT ON THE EVENING OF 17 MAN, AND

WAS ENGAGED IN FISHING OFF WONSAN WHEN IT LOST ITS COURSE AND WAS DRIFTING ON THE HIGH SEAS NEAR THE EXTENSION OF THE DMZ LINE. THE CREW MEMBERS, ACCORDING TO THE BROADCAST, REPEATEDLY SENT OUT AN SOS. THE BROADCAST CONCLUDES THAT THIS WAS AN ACT OF PIRACY.

3. AT 0258 GMT ON 20 MAY, HAPTONG DESCRIBED THE VESSEL AS A NORTH KOREAN ESPIONAGE BOAT WITH 8 AGENTS ABOARD. HAPTONG REPORTED THAT A SOUTH KOREAN NAVY PATROL BOAT CRUISING THE AREA CHALLENGED THE NORTH KOREAN BOAT BUT IT FLED NORTHEAST. IT KEPT FLEEING UNTIL THE SOUTH KOREAN NAVY CRAFT QUOTE BLOCKED ITS ESCAPE ROUTE FROM THE REAR END QUOTE AND SUNK IT. THE ANNOUNCEMENT SAID.
SNEIDER

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